

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 and 7-11 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-5 and 7-11 are amended and claims 6 and 12-15 are cancelled. Support for the amendment to claim 1 may be found at least in claim 6 and paragraph [0025] of the specification.

Furthermore, claims 1-5 and 7-11 are amended to correct informalities. No new matter is added by the above amendments. In view of at least the following, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

I. Telephone Interview

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representative by Examiner Lalli in the May 15, 2008 telephone interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks. Specifically, Examiner Lalli indicated that she treated the December 28, 2005 Supplemental Preliminary Amendment as not entered. Thus, this Amendment is based on the claims as presented in the September 20, 2005 Preliminary Amendment.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thanks the Examiner for the indication that claims 6 and 12-15 contain allowable subject matter and that the claims would be allowable if written in independent form to include the features of base claim 1 and any intervening claims.

By this Amendment, the allowable subject matter of claim 6 is incorporated into base claim 1, and claims 6 and 12-15 are correspondingly cancelled.

Accordingly, allowance of independent claim 1 and dependent claims 2-5 and 7-11, which variously depend from claim 1, is respectfully requested.

III. Objection to the Specification

The Office Action objects to the specification because the abstract allegedly does not include proper language and proper format in accordance with MPEP §608.01(b). This objection is respectfully traversed.

By this Amendment, a substitute abstract is submitted. Applicants respectfully submit that the substitute abstract is in compliance with MPEP §608.01(b).

Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

IV. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 3,311,248 (Marchant) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,310,101 (Sekine); and rejects claims 1-3, 7, 9 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,988,630 (Matsumoto) in view of Sekine and Applicants' alleged prior art admission. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

By this Amendment, independent claim 1 is amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 6, as discussed above. Therefore, as acknowledged by the Office Action, Marchant and Sekine, individually or in combination, and Matsumoto, Sekine and Applicants' allegedly prior art admission, individually or in any combination, do not disclose or establish any reason to provide at least the features recited in claim 1. Therefore, Marchant, Sekine and Matsumoto fail to render obvious the subject matter recited in independent claim 1.

Claims 2-5 and 7-11 variously depend from claim 1. Because the applied art references fail to render obvious the subject matter recited in independent claim 1, dependent claims 2-5 and 7-11 are allowable at least for the reasons that claim 1 is allowable, as well as for the additional features they recite.

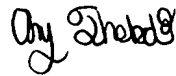
Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

V. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:AAT/ccs

Attachment:
Petition for Extension of Time

Date: May 29, 2008

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